

## *How our MPs can restore trust*

The Toronto Star

February 24, 2022 Thursday

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**Section:** OPINION; Pg. A17

**Length:** 579 words

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### **Body**

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As a member of Parliament, I had the privilege of participating in one of our historic political debates: the invocation of the War Measures Act in 1970. Seeing it invoked during the October Crisis left a lasting impression on me, just as it did on people across Canada. I voted against the War Measures Act then, and, in 1988, I worked across party lines to abolish it and aid in the creation of today's Emergencies Act.

There's no question that the action to shut down our borders and the nation's capital should have been stopped well before the use of the Emergencies Act had to be contemplated.

The moral and right thing to do was to end the occupations that were inflicting pain on innocent Canadians. That's exactly what the federal government did after being forced into taking responsibility because others with the power and resources to help didn't do so.

So now that the Emergencies Act has been revoked, how can we rebuild trust?

Parliamentarians will begin an inquiry of the events of the past three weeks and make the proposals necessary to prevent this from happening again.

A question that hangs over Canada is why wasn't the basic rule of law upheld? We need to ask ourselves why existing bylaw enforcement and security event planning failed.

Indeed, those with the power to do so need to evaluate how the division of responsibility between jurisdictions, especially in downtown Ottawa, failed its citizens. The Emergencies Act requires an inquiry to examine the circumstances of its use, and this inquiry must not be a face-saving operation. The investigation must be rigorous, respected and non-partisan. But we also need to look at the bigger picture.

Given the past abuses and overreach of security powers used against Indigenous, racial and climate justice activists, many are interpreting the inaction of the police to reflect a double standard. The last Royal Commission on Policing happened in 1962, this was followed by the McDonald Commission of 1984, now is the time for a contemporary review that recommends best practices in terms of police duties, powers and budgets.

The people of Ottawa, Windsor, Ont., and Coutts, Alta., certainly felt abandoned. Canadians are fearful of government overreach and a diminishing of their civil liberties. Answers from an inquiry and plausible recommendations can help restore trust.

Most importantly, we all need to work on rebuilding social solidarity. Let's not forget the "we are all in this together" slogans from the pandemic's beginning. We need to address the issues that have created an environment for legitimate anger to grow.

## How our MPs can restore trust

We've seen incredible solidarity over the past two years.

We have one of the highest vaccination rates globally, and most of us do care about our neighbours.

We now need to build on that solidarity to fix the gaps in our country that continue to grow.

We need to correct the rising cost of living.

We need to re-enforce our health-care system so Canadians can count on it when they need it.

And we need to make those who have made billions off this pandemic contribute their fair share of taxes to the common good.

At such a historic moment, we all must do everything we can to get it right.

We have a choice: work together to build a better Canada or step away and let the anger win.

Ed Broadbent is the chair emeritus of the Broadbent Institute. He was a member of Parliament when the War Measures Act was debated in 1970 and was the Leader of the NDP when the Emergencies Act was created.

## Classification

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**Language:** ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Journal Code:** TTA

**Subject:** LEGISLATIVE BODIES (90%); NEGATIVE NEWS (90%); INVESTIGATIONS (87%); REPORTS, REVIEWS & SECTIONS (79%); BIPARTISANSHIP (78%); GOVERNMENT & PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION (78%); POLITICAL DEBATES (78%); NEGATIVE PERSONAL NEWS (77%); RULE OF LAW (73%); VACCINES (68%); ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE (67%); RACE & ETHNICITY (67%); RACIAL JUSTICE (67%); POLICE FORCES (66%); VACCINATION & IMMUNIZATION (60%); EDITORIALS & OPINIONS (59%)

**Industry:** VACCINES (68%); VACCINATION & IMMUNIZATION (60%)

**Person:** JANOS ADER (78%)

**Geographic:** OTTAWA, ON, CANADA (90%); ONTARIO, CANADA (58%); CANADA (94%)

**Load-Date:** February 24, 2022